

SHAKESPEARE AND AUTISM

Purpose

The Shakespeare and Autism Project, a longitudinal study, asks the following research questions: Will drama, using Shakespeare, break through the communicative blocks of autism? Can the intervention have long-term benefits?

Impact

This project includes a full, randomized control study of students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Anecdotal evidence indicates that drama-based intervention is a useful tool to improve the core symptoms of ASD in children and adolescents.

Kelly Hunter, former Royal Shakespeare Company actress, and Robin Post, Ohio State's project director, have trained a team of Ohio State graduate and undergraduate theatre students; they are implementing Hunter's signature approach, the Hunter Heartbeat Method, which pairs the recitation of Shakespeare's rhythmic language with physical gesture in a way that is accessible to those with ASD. A service-learning course has been developed at Ohio State to ensure that this work continues into the future.

OHIO STATE COLLEGES/UNITS INVOLVED

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE
NISONGER CENTER
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER

COMMUNITY PARTNERS INVOLVED

KILBOURNE MIDDLE SCHOOL
NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S AUTISM
TREATMENT NETWORK
COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS
ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY
FAMILIES, CHILDREN, AND
CARE-GIVERS WITHIN THE COLUMBUS
COMMUNITY



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